

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of processing packets at a firewall in a packet-switched
2 network comprising:
3 receiving an outbound packet from a process group network address; and
4 authorizing subsequent inbound packet traffic destined for the process
5 group network address.

1 2. The invention of claim 1 further comprising the subsequent step of
2 canceling authorization for subsequent inbound packet traffic destined for the process
3 group network address after a period of time.

1 3. The invention of claim 2 wherein the outbound packet begins a
2 connection protocol and authorization is canceled after the connection terminates.

1 4. The invention of claim 1 wherein the addresses are expressed as IPv4
2 address.

1 5. The invention of claim 1 wherein the addresses are expressed as IPv6
2 addresses, wherein a portion of the address is reserved to identify a host process group.

1 6. A method of processing packets at a host which are destined for a
2 firewall in a packet-switched network comprising the steps of:
3 assigning a process group network address to a first outbound packet
4 commencing a process;
5 transmitting the outbound packet to a firewall on its path to its destination
6 in a packet-switched network;

7 receiving inbound packets addressed to the process group network
8 address; and

9 receiving and associating inbound packets addressed to the process group
10 network address with the process.

1 7. The invention of claim 6 wherein the process is a connection across
2 the packet-switched network to another host.

1 8. The invention of claim 6 further comprising the step of notifying the
2 firewall when the process terminates.

1 9. The invention of claim 6 wherein the host uses a dynamic host
2 configuration protocol to dynamically assign the process group network address.

1 10. A computer readable medium containing executable program
2 instructions for performing a method on a firewall connected to a packet-switched
3 network comprising the steps of:

4 receiving an outbound packet from a process group network address; and
5 authorizing subsequent inbound packet traffic destined for the process
6 group network address.

1 11. The invention of claim 10 further comprising the subsequent step of
2 canceling authorization for subsequent inbound packet traffic destined for the process
3 group network address after a period of time.

1 12. The invention of claim 11 wherein the outbound packet begins a
2 connection protocol and authorization is canceled after the connection terminates.

1 13. The invention of claim 10 wherein the addresses are expressed as IPv4
2 address.

1 14. The invention of claim 10 wherein the addresses are expressed as IPv6
2 addresses, wherein a portion of the address is reserved to identify a host process group.

1 15. A computer readable medium containing executable program
2 instructions for performing a method on a host connected to a packet-switched network
3 comprising the steps of:

4 assigning a process group network address to a first outbound packet
5 commencing a process;
6 transmitting the outbound packet to a firewall on its path to its destination
7 in a packet-switched network;
8 receiving inbound packets addressed to the process group network
9 address; and
10 receiving and associating inbound packets addressed to the process group
11 network address with the process.

1 16. The invention of claim 15 wherein the process is a connection across
2 the packet-switched network to another host.

1 17. The invention of claim 15 further comprising the step of notifying the
2 firewall when the process terminates.

1 18. The invention of claim 15 wherein the host uses a dynamic host
2 configuration protocol to dynamically assign the process group network address.